

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 MCT-01 /064 W

-----230526Z 090815 /20

O 230430Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1109

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3998

FOL TEL DATED 22 APR 77 RECEIVED ACTION ISLAMABAD INFO

AMCONSUL LAHORE REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO, QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 1911

E.O. 116."": GDS

TAGS: PK, PINT

SUBJECT: SECURITY/POLITICAL SITUATION IN KARACHI

1. BEFORE THE SUSPENSION OF THE CURFEW ENDED AT 1600 TODAY, A
LARGE CROWD ASSEMBLED IN LIAQUATABAD AND WAS FIRED ON BY ARMY TROOPS,
ACCORDING TO ONE OF OUR LOCAL EMPLOYEES WHO SAYS HE WAS AN EYEWITNESS.

HE DESCRIBES THE FIRING AS BEING UNPROVOKED, EXCEPT FOR THE FACT OF
THE GATHERING AS SUCH, AND HE ESTIMATES THAT 25 PERSONS FELL TO THE
GROUND. WE HAVE OTHER, LESS SUBSTANTIAL, REPORTS OF LESSER DEMONST-
RATIONS DURING THE SUSPENSE PERIOD AND REPORTS FROM NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS

THAT SEVERAL GROUPS WERE IN THE STREETS EVEN WHILE THE CURFEW WAS
IN EFFECT.

2. WELL-CONNECTED JOURNALISTS WHOM WE HAVE FOUND WELL INFORMED
AND RELIABLE IN THE PAST REPORT THAT THE PNA HAS DECIDED THAT IT MUST
PURSUE A POLICY OF CHALLENGING MARTIAL LAW AND THE CURFEW TO BREAK ITS

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PRESENT IMPASSE WITH BHUTTO. THE PNA IS SAID TO BE PREPARED TO
SUPPORT THIS POSITION BY REFUSING TO SEND ITS MEMBERS BACK TO
WORK AND BY GOING INTO THE STREETS TO DEFY THE CURFEW. OUR SOURCES
EXPECT THIS MILITANT POLICY TO MANIFEST ITSELF VERY SOON IN ORDER
TO GET THE MOVEMENT OFF DEAD CENTER. THEY REPORT ONE INCIDENT
IN LYARI THIS MORNING IN WHICH TWO PERSONS DEFYING THE CURFEW WERE
SHOT DEAD BY THE ARMY.

3. OUR JOURNALISTIC SOURCES ALSO REPORT WIDESPREAD SPECULATION AMONG NEWSMEN AND OTHER OBSERVERS AS TO WHY NO MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR HAS BEEN NAMED. IT IS ALSO UNCLEAR TO OBSERVERS HERE JUST HOW AND BY WHAT AUTHORITY THE MARTIAL LAW ORDER WAS ISSUED.

ORDINARILY THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR WOULD BE NAMED ALONG WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARTIAL LAW AND HE WOULD BE THE SENIOR COMMANDER IN THE AREA CONCERNED, IN THIS CASE LIEUTENANT GENERAL ARBAB, FIFTH CORPS COMMANDER. THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC NOTICE OF HIS ASSUMING THAT ROLE NOR ANY VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF HIS EXERCISING IT BEYOND THE OVERALL CONDUCT OF SECURITY OPERATIONS. THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO FUNCTION WITH THEIR CUSTOMARY AUTHORITY TO ALL APPEARANCES; IT IS DECLARED BY SOME THAT GENERAL ARBAB HAS SOUGHT CLARIFICATION OF HIS POSITION UNDER MARTIAL LAW AND DECLINED TO TAKE ORDERS FROM CIVIL OFFICIALS IF IN FACT MARTIAL LAW IS IN FORCE. MEANTIME, "THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR", UNIDENTIFIED, IS REPORTED BY RADIO NEWS TO HAVE DECREED BANS ON PARTY FLAGS, FIREARMS IN PRIVATE HANDS, LOUDSPEAKERS FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN CALLS TO PRAYER, AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS. A STRONG THREAD OF SPECULATION HERE HAS IT THAT BHUTTO MAY BE ATTEMPTING IN EFFECT TO IMPOSE MARTIAL LAW WITHOUT TURNING ITS ADMINISTRATION OVER TO THE ARMY, OR THAT HE MAY HAVE GAINED THE AGREEMENT OF THE TOP OFFICERS TO THE MOVE BUT NOT THAT OF THE CORPS COMMANDERS.

4. REPORTS FROM HYDERABAD STATE THAT THERE WAS DELIBERATE DEFIANCE OF THE CURFEW THERE TODAY ALSO WITH TWO PERSONS SHOT DEAD AS A RESULT.

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5. THE OMINOUS ATMOSPHERE THAT SEEMS TO BE BUILDING UP IS ATTESTED TO BY THE ABSENCE OF ANY INDICATION THAT THE CURFEW WILL BE SUSPENDED AT ANY TIME TOMORROW. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF SUCH SUSPENSIONS ARE USUALLY MADE THE PRECEDING EVENING, BUT THERE WAS NONE TONIGHT.

MOORE UNQUOTE
CONSTABLE

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NNN

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